

THE ENGINEERING EDGE

EDGEWOOD CHEMICAL BIOLOGICAL CENTER



ECBC ENGINEERING
Design→Build→Test→Support

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Leadership Interview Series: *Eugene Vickers*

This month Surety and Novel Testing Senior Branch Chief Eugene Vickers provides *The Edge* with an insightful perspective on engineering. During this one-on-one interview, Mr. Vickers shares his wisdom about the Surety and Novel Testing Branch and his diverse role in Engineering.



*Eugene Vickers,
Surety and Novel Testing
Senior Branch Chief*

Engineering Edge: Can you give me a little bit of your career background before you came to be the Senior Chief of the Surety and Novel Testing Branch?

Eugene Vickers: While I have worked for over 20 years as an agent handler, I am fairly new to my current position. I became the Senior Branch Chief in July of 2009. Prior to working at the Edgewood Chemical Biological Center (ECBC) I was with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) in D.C. I worked there for approximately two years as the chief of their accredited lab program. I oversaw 65 non-federal labs where we worked on all kinds of food products, including: meat, eggs and poultry. It was our job to inspect the food items and issue them a certificate of analysis for USDA accreditation. Delving even further back, I started my career as an E3 Private First Class for three years. (Continued on page 2)

Branch Spotlight: *Strategic Planning and Business Operations*

In this month's issue of the Edge, the Strategic Planning and Business Operations (SPBO) Branch sits down to give a closer look into the team's inner workings. SPBO is part of the Business Management and Systems Engineering Group in Engineering Directorate.



The SPBO Branch consists of seven members. Each of these branch members plays a different role in the very diverse capabilities of the SPBO Branch, focusing in the functional areas of manpower management, human capital management, strategic planning and knowledge management. Leading the pack, Ed Bowen serves as the SPBO Branch Chief. "I have been the SPBO Chief since (Continued on page 2)

BSC NEEDS YOU!

P2 Initiative 4

Recruit and Retain Qualified People:
Be a part of this initiative by developing an orientation program for new hires.

*To join this initiative team please
contact Ed Bowen at ext. 4091*

Environmental and Field Testing Branch Wins ISO Accreditation

In Nov. 2009, the Environmental and Field Testing (EFT) Branch was awarded the International Organization of Standardization (ISO) 17025 A2LA Accreditation. In a one-on-one interview, *The Edge* reporters met with Branch Chief Chris Myers to discuss the group's recent and praiseworthy accomplishment.

Engineering Edge: Can you give me some background on ISO accreditations?

Chris Myers: An ISO accreditation is a document that lays out different rules and regulations for labs and explains the different items that need to be accredited by the association. It is a kind of standardization for labs. Having this accreditation proves that this lab does its work to the standards necessary to give customers that confidence. It shows that this quality process is being performed and it shows that our labs are doing work to a high level and high standard.

EE: What kind of work does the EFT Branch focus on?

CM: What we do here is testing in conjunction with vibration, rough handling, adverse environment, soil radiation, high temperature, humidity etc. Our group's focus is on mechanical testing. Our branch tests anything that comes to the center, including: items from chemical agent detectors, to mask work, to ammunition, to smoke grenades, to non-surety items.

EE: When did your team begin working on achieving this accreditation?

CM: This all started in 2005 when I wrote the initial quality manual, which is the basis of any quality system. This manual includes all kinds of forms and documents in regards to a lab. I wrote the initial manual in approximately one to two years. Audrey Moberly contributed to the initial quality system and (Continued on page 4)



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For article suggestions,
questions or comments
please contact Ed Bowen
at ed.bowen@us.army.mil



Branch Spotlight: Strategic Planning and Business Operations

(Continued from page 1) March of 2008. Before becoming the Branch Chief, I was a branch member on this team's predecessor, the Workforce Employee Development Team under Dr. Pam Barrett. Prior to coming to ECBC I worked with the APG Garrison and the old Test and Evaluation Command Headquarters. My last position at the Garrison was as Chief of the Manpower and Agreements Team in the Directorate of Resource Management," said Bowen.

Bowen's role as the SPBO Branch chief involves a number of various work streams in addition to the implied supervisory duties. "I am personally involved with managing the Engineering Directorate's Table of Distribution and Allowances (TDA) and I am the Balanced Scorecard (BSC) manager for the directorate. As the supervisor of the SPBO branch I oversee the whole group and help coordinate things. Most of my time is spent managing the TDA or the BSC in addition to supervisory duties such as appraisals," said Bowen.

Since he began the role of SPBO Branch Chief, Bowen has had unwavering enthusiasm towards the progress and future of the group. "The biggest highlight for me was implementing the BSC. Mike Brown played a big part in implementing a strategic management system through the work he has done with the communications and knowledge management areas, the document repository, the intranet and SharePoint. Additionally, with Debbie Yonce coming on board, we are able to take advantage of her years of experience in the civilian personnel arena thus greatly improving our human capital management capabilities. Her contributions have allowed us to improve our training and hiring process to name just a few areas," said Bowen. "From the strategic planning perspective I want to expand BSC participation. I also want to coordinate with the

Center level of BSC. It is important that we are working alongside with the Center. I help with this by participating on the Center level core team and working with a cross-directorate team to roll out the Center level scorecard to the workforce."

Providing support in the important areas of human capital management and training are Debbie Yonce, Teresa Dorman, Inez Tyson and Sabre Harper. While fairly new to the team, Senior Human Capital Management Specialist Debbie Yonce brings a plethora of experience to the group. "I have been with the team for one year and four months," said Yonce, "My main role is to support management in their personnel actions. I do more of the up-front advising in the personnel arena as well as coordinating those personnel actions." In addition to those roles, Yonce works as a point of contact (POC) between management and the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC). Additionally, Yonce has also served as the training coordinator for the Directorate.

Yonce is inspired, enthusiastic and focused in her work by the effort she sees from her group. "One highlight for me is the initiative I see within the team. Our focus has been to get all of the personnel documents into the document repository, both personnel actions and training documents," said Yonce, "Mike developed the database and other team members have worked with him. I was also impressed by the intern log that Mike created to keep all intern information. It's like a suspense system for us."

Currently, there are some role changes taking place

within the area of training. "Inez is starting taking over the area of training requests as the new Directorate Training Coordinator. She will be processing and reviewing the training requests for their legality," said Yonce, "Additionally, Teresa is in charge of the Federal Career Intern Program (FCIP) and what I've done up to this point is try to transition the responsibilities associated with the FCIP over to Teresa so she eventually runs that whole program."

Group member Sabre Harper is matrixed to Engineering from the Directorate of Program Integration and serves as the Engineering Directorate Human Resources Representative. "I have been a part of the SPBO branch for approximately one and a half years. Before this I spent one year working with CPAC on administrative tasks," said Harper.

Harper's main roles are in the areas of personnel actions. "I spend a good amount of my time answering a lot of personnel and benefits questions. I also submit many Requests for Personal Action (RPA and process appraisals. I input all personnel information into our database," said Harper, "Basically, I'm here to service the organization, to meet there personnel needs and to answer any questions."

Program Support Specialist Inez Tyson provides the SPBO Branch, and the Engineering Directorate with massive amounts of critical training and workforce support. While somewhat new to the SPBO Branch, Inez has wasted no time diving in head first into her new roles and responsibilities. "I am fairly new to the group, I have been with the SPBO branch for approximately four months now," said Tyson, "One of my personal highlights was learning how to process a (Continued on page 4)

Leadership Interview Series: Eugene Vickers

(Continued from page 1)

EE: What does a typical day look like for you?

EV: Currently, I oversee approximately 40 Surety and Novel Test Branch members. These 40 members make up three individual teams. Out of those 40 team members, 10 report directly to me, as I am their supervisor. In addition to supervisory tasks, I spend a good amount of my time attending meetings during which we review all surety and safety operations. It is my responsibility to make certain that our labs are meeting all requirements, as well as maintaining the proper equipment. I also take part in the Personnel Reliability Program (PRP). In this program there are a number of evaluations performed, such as physicals and background checks.

EE: What have been some of your most memorable highlights since you began your career?

EV: One of my big highlights was when I was given the opportunity to work with the Chemical Materials Agency (CMA). My first assignment was to work with the chemical demilitarization facility called Umatilla Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (UMCDF). From 2000 to 2003 this lab was just beginning to run their particular operations 24 hours a day. In order for this lab to continue running their operations at this level they were required to obtain an environmental permit. This permit ensured that if the lab was to set off an alarm they would report a confirmation or denial of the alarm to the proper authorities within a four hour timeframe. Other-

wise the lab would be forced to stop all operations due to an alarm event. An episode like this would cost the lab \$250,000 per day to shut-down and stop operations. In order to prevent this from happening I developed a method which the state agreed to sign off on, thus allowing the lab to remain operational 24 hours a day.

EE: What was the most rewarding part of working on this task?

EV: During the course of this task I was able to bring support to the transition of a lab. In order to help this transition go as smoothly as possible it was necessary for me to build coalitions and teams amongst different groups. I was able to bring people from ECBC to UMCDF, which inspired a great deal of collaboration. Working on this task was also rewarding for me because I was able to see the fruits of my labor. It's always nice to see a final product or outcome when you spend day in and day out working on a task. In addition to seeing the final product, I was also able to realize the value of my work. It satisfies me to know that because of my method I was able to save the Army a good amount of money.

EE: Can you recall any other significant career highlights?

EV: At an earlier point in my career I sat on the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB). The work I was doing with the NTSB was different than what I had been used to. After the occurrence of any disaster situation I (Continued on page 4)

Engineering Value of the Month: Loyalty



Loyalty is the first of seven values of an army soldier.

To be loyal means to bear true faith and allegiance to the U.S. consti-

tution, the Army and other soldiers; to be loyal to the nation and its heritage.

Bearing true faith and allegiance is a matter of believing in and devoting yourself to something or someone. Supporting leadership and standing up for fellow Soldiers are the marks of a loyal Soldier. By devoting your time and effort to the U.S. Army, you are conveying your loyalty. By doing your share, you show your devotion and dedication to your country.

The Army's example of loyalty:

The Decision at the Marias. The men thought the route ran to the northwest up the Marias River, while both Lewis and Clark thought the main river channel ran to the southwest. The men agreed to go along with the decision of the captains to proceed to the southwest, which was indeed the Missouri River. ⚙️

March is National Nutrition Month

During National Nutrition Month® and Beyond, the Key to a Healthy Diet is Improving Your Nutrition from the Ground Up

It's common knowledge that a healthy diet is an important part of a healthy lifestyle, but most people have trouble figuring out what to do when planning a complete diet overhaul.

During National Nutrition Month®, the American Dietetic Association (ADA) reminds everyone that an easy way to focus on eating better is to start with the basics: build your nutritional health from the ground up. "By starting slowly and giving yourself a good foundation, you can work towards a healthier life," says registered dietitian and ADA spokesperson Toby Smithson. "Change doesn't have to be dramatic to make a difference."

Smithson suggests ways to improve your nutrition from the ground up:

- **Focus on fruits and veggies:** "Take a good look at your current diet, you'll probably realize you're not eating enough fruits or vegetables," says Smithson. "Add a serving each day to one meal and increase it every few weeks. Adding more of these foods into your diet is important whether you buy frozen, fresh or organic."
- **Look locally:** From farmer's markets to community-supported agriculture, you have many options to find new, fresh foods in your area. "This can be a great way to eat well and support your community at the same time," Smithson says.
- **Make calories count:** "Too often, people think of foods as good or bad and that only those on the 'good foods' list are okay to eat," says Smithson. "When you're choosing between options, focus instead on the one with more of the vitamins and nutrients that you need. Sometimes, foods with fewer calories aren't always the healthiest options." To figure out how many calories you need to achieve a healthy weight, visit www.mypyramid.gov.
- **Test your taste buds:** A healthy eating plan emphasizes fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low-fat or fat-free dairy and includes lean meats, poultry, fish, beans and nuts. "Those are the basics, but within this wide range there are always opportunities to try new things and find new favorites," Smithson says. "Expand your horizons. Try a fish you've never eaten before or find a new vegetable recipe. By testing yourself, you might find new healthy favorites to add to your regular grocery list."
- **Trick yourself with treats:** "A healthful diet doesn't mean deprivation," says Smithson. "If you have a sweet tooth, have fruit and yogurt for dessert. If you want a snack in the afternoon, have some trail mix or nuts. There is no reason to go hungry just because you're making healthful changes."

For more tips on building your healthful diet from the ground up, during National Nutrition Month® and all year long, visit www.eatright.org and click on "For the Public."

The ADA is the world's largest organization of food and nutrition professionals. ADA is committed to improving the nation's health and advancing the profession of dietetics through research, education and advocacy. Visit the American Dietetic Association at www.eatright.org.

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Security Tip of the Month: Badges

1. AMC policy 05-05-AMCCC states that all AMC contractor employees will be issued, and will display at all times, distinctive identification badges which clearly differentiate them from Government personnel. To satisfy this policy, ECBC contractor employees must wear either; a Common Access Card (CAC) with a green stripe, DA Form 1602 (Civilian ID Card) or a company issued ID Card while on Government installations. A copy of this policy will be posted to the ECBC Security Web site.
2. APG Mobility Badges must be removed by all personnel when they are outside the secure area and can not be reproduced or used for identification purposes outside of the secure area. Police and Security Personnel can and will confiscate them if they are seen outside the secure area.
3. All ECBC personnel to include support contractors have the right to challenge any person who they do not recognize within ECBC controlled areas for ID and purpose for being there. Personnel who are challenged are required to comply. Suspicious or uncooperative personnel should be immediately reported to the Security staff or APG Police.

For more information, contact your security officer at ext-6810. ⚙



Sabre Harper's HR Tip of the Month: Changing Beneficiaries



Sabre Harper,
Engineering HR
Representative

Engineering employees can change beneficiaries at any time. Hard copies of the Federal Employees Retirement System (FERS), Federal Employees Group Life Insurance (FGLI) and Unpaid Compensation forms should be delivered to Terri Wright at the Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC). All Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) and Civilian Service Retirement System (CSRS) forms go to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). To add family members to your health insurance or pick up family on Federal Employees Group Life Insurance (FGLI), you must go through the Army Benefits Center (ABC). For more information please contact Engineering Human Resources Representative Sabre Harper at extension 5-2722. ⚙

Leadership Interview Series: Eugene Vickers

(Continued from page 2) would sit in on different cases. I worked with my team to collect data about the disaster, as well as communicate with disaster victims. In this position I was out of my comfort zone. While working with NTSB I also provided management support. On a daily basis I was dealing with different staff issues, like parking permits, keys and other personnel items. During this time I was able to hone in on my people skills. Through practice I became more comfortable and capable of communicating effectively with the staff from a managerial standpoint. This career opportunity allowed me to focus on organizing myself and my management skills.

EE: What have been some of the challenges you have faced throughout your career?

EV: The biggest challenge for me is making sure that the workers are properly trained. These employees are working with both old and new chemical compounds. Some of my employees are young, or non-chemist/engineers who are switching over to the lab setting. Because of this it is important that everyone is training properly so they can conduct operations safely. In order to keep up with safety standards we hold a monthly meeting during which I preach safety. Additionally, we conduct training in-house and out-house to help the workers become more aware of the safety protocols. I try to make it a point that I don't just sit behind a desk. I frequent the labs while the team is conducting operations. It's important to me that they know I am always available if they have a question or problem. But most importantly, I want my employees to feel safe.

EE: What makes you most excited about the work you do here at ECBC?

EV: For me the most exciting aspect of working here is the people that I do the work with and the tasks that we complete. The work we do is dangerous, but it's also very exciting. I truly enjoy my work because I know that I am able to help protect the soldiers. I also love the work I do because of the nature of the world today. It's important that I am able to protect civilians by preventing dangerous chemicals from getting into the wrong hands.

EE: What kind of advice would you give the members of the Engineering workforce who would like to someday see themselves in a position like yours?

EV: I believe that you should be passionate about what you do. You will not put your best effort into your work if you don't care about what it is you're trying to accomplish. It is also important to remember the importance of networking. By talking to different people and networking you can build up your resources and important long-term business relationships to accomplish your goals. Mentors are another important resource for anyone. It's not necessary that your mentor be in the same field that you work in. However, it is important that your mentor is someone that you can discuss your career with and bounce ideas off of. Finally, one tool that I strongly recommend that every employee utilize is the Individual Development Plan (IDP). You can work with your supervisor to develop a five to 10 year plan. This plan will give you a better idea of what you want your future to look like, and which path you need to take to get there. Your IDP helps both you as an employee and your manager to be prepared for the future in terms of training, funding and time requirements. ⚙️

Environmental and Field Testing Branch Wins ISO Accreditation

(Continued from page 1) implemented the system. After some initial tweaking of the quality system we started working towards accreditation.

EE: What are some of the benefits to having this ISO Accreditation?

CM: The accreditation is beneficial to us in regards to Test Service Agreements (TSA). For example, if General Dynamics came to us, we could do work for them because we meet their requirements. There are lots of jobs that came through that needed this accreditation and we didn't want to lose work because we didn't have it.

EE: How did you begin applying for this accreditation?

CM: Initially, Audrey Moberly sent the information to A2LA - one of several credited bodies that do accreditations. We started the process in May of 2009 and initially got back an audit. After receiving that audit we started trying to fix the some of the things that they didn't like. Afterwards, Kate Furman began

working as the quality manager and she began tweaking our quality system. On Nov. 11 our accreditation finally came through. I think it will bring in more work with TSA's, Cooperative Research and Development Agreements (CRADA), as well as with outside contractor work. We did this both for ourselves and to show outside partners so they can feel safe using us.

EE: What was the key to your success with this accreditation?

CM: This was definitely a group effort. I get a lot of credit, but my team did all of the final dirty work. I am proud of the scope of work that we did, which is quite extensive. I am very proud of the amount of work that went into this. It has been a very long and hard effort for the whole branch. The branch realized the importance of getting us to this point. The entire process has been a five year effort ultimately. This is something that we did we look at as a way for survivability and viability as a team. Engineering leadership has been very supportive of us. The Engineering Directorate is taking a very proactive approach. ⚙️



Branch Spotlight: Strategic Planning and Business Operations

(Continued from page 2) training request. I feel like through the trial-and-error process I've learned so much already." Her role will include supporting the three major functional areas of the team, so she will gain experience in a number of areas.

Right now Tyson is taking over the training responsibilities as the Directorate's Training Coordinator. "My work will focus on in-processing training requests, obtaining new requests, reviewing requests for legality, assigning document numbers to requests, obligating the appropriate monies, straighten out all of the associated paperwork," said Tyson.

Another critical human capital capability within the SPBO Branch is staffing and intern recruitment for the Engineering directorate. This area is run by Career Development Specialist Teresa Dorman. "I have been with the SPBO Branch, or its predecessor since 2004. My main function on this branch is working with Intern Recruitment for our Federal Career Intern Program (FCIP)," said Dorman.

Dorman's daily efforts provide the Engineering Directorate with highly qualified recruits and staff. "My biggest highlight is being able to put my Human Resource degree to work to recruit interns for our Directorate. In doing this I have been able to fill most of the annual intern recruitments for Program Manager Office teams, as well as for in-house teams. We've brought some of the best and brightest new employees onboard and I think we have had some great match ups with the teams," said Dorman. "In the future I hope to be able to continue meeting the intern needs for all teams within our Directorate and to help management with retention goals as well as recruitment." Teresa's focus on providing exemplary customer service, not only to Engineering Directorate senior leadership and teams but also to the potential interns is paramount to supporting our Core Competency of providing a trained and knowledgeable workforce.

Knowledge Management Leader Mike Brown and Knowledge Management Specialist Swapana Gupta provide support to the group in the areas of knowledge management and communications. Native SPBO branch member Mike Brown has been providing support to the Engineering Directorate as a Senior Knowledge Management Specialist beginning with the branches predecessor, 10 years ago.

Through his time here in Engineering, Brown has acquired a variety of skills and technical knowledge. His roles within the branch are both critical and diverse. "I am responsible for identifying the requirements and methods for collecting, preserving and providing access to the organizations corporate knowledge.

This in itself requires identifying subject matter, sources, and methods for collecting, digitizing and managing information that exist in both hard copy and digital form," said Brown.

In addition to these duties, Brown provides management with recommendations and guidance concerning program implementation, internal operating procedures and what personnel and equipment resources are necessary for success. "I track data requirements and develop reporting tools to meet management's needs in the areas of training, team assignments and computer equipment," said Brown, "I also provide photography and graphic design service to support our image library."

Brown's contributions to the team have been evident in both recent and past accomplishments. "I originated and built the Personnel Resource Database (critical to managing the Directorate's manpower program and providing personnel statistics to leadership) and created the original Engineering Web site," said Brown, "I designed all of the original graphics for the Web site, as well as the briefing templates and the Engineering Directorate logo. I identified the need to collect and preserve corporate knowledge which led to the creation of the image library and document repository. I have worked with all levels of management to gather support and participation with data collection efforts which has resulted in collection of over 12,000 high resolution digital photographs, all cleared for public release and over 16,000 historical documents."

In the interest of the Engineering Directorate, Brown intends to continue expanding his current initiatives. "I'm interested in expanding the entire knowledge management scope to include all Engineering Directorate functions such as infrastructure, inventory and administrative records. I have identified approximately 100,000 documents to be processed and added into the document repository," said Brown, "SharePoint will provide the interface for employee to access this information. I'm also interested in taking the existing personnel resource database and converting it into a My SQL database which will provide an intranet interface and allow Common Access Card CAC access."

Swapana Gupta, Knowledge Management Specialist, has been a member of the SPBO group for past three years. His contributions to the SPBO branch include assisting in Web page design on CB Net for the various Engineering Directorate branches and divisions, coding a variety of Web pages and providing input on the Engineering Directorate SharePoint page. "Recently I coded the Commodities Team web pages under BSC strategic objective IP6. I have also been creating databases in Access 2003/2007 in addition to assisting with the management of the Engineering Directorate Document Repository of historical team program documents," said Gupta. He truly enjoys the work he does and as a result is enthusiastic about his areas of expertise. "I enjoy coding, arranging pages and seeing databases function seamlessly. That's the best aspect of this team." ⚙️